

Polit. Pamph. vol 150.

THE
LETTERS

OF

BRUTUS *K*

TO

CERTAIN CELEBRATED POLITICAL CHARACTERS.

*Primores populi arripuit—
Scilicet uni æquus virtuti atque ejus amicis.*

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY STEWART, RUTHVEN, AND COMPANY.

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1791.

THE

LETTERS

BRUTUS



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ADVERTISEMENT.

EDINBURGH, APRIL 16. 1791,

ABOUT twelve months ago, a News-Paper was established here, under the title of THE EDINBURGH HERALD, which has been honoured, not only with the patronage and approbation of many persons of the highest rank, but by the occasional assistance of some of the most celebrated literary men in this part of the kingdom. Among the valuable communications that have been made to the Readers of that Paper are the LETTERS now presented to the Public. They have been so much admired in Scotland, and so much talked of in the political circles of London, where the EDINBURGH HERALD is not unknown, that an Edition of them separately seemed to be generally expected. The Author, like JUNIUS, has chosen to conceal himself, and has even left the Publishers uncertain whether his residence is in the Metropolis of South or of North Britain. Whatever are his motives for this concealment, they are not those of JUNIUS; and this perhaps is the only circumstance in which the Letters of *Brutus* will refuse a comparison with those of his celebrated predecessor.

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LETTERS

FROM

B R U T U S.

LETTER I.

*To Lieut. General B*****.*

SIR,

EVERY Moralist has told us, that there are certain situations which try the conduct of men, which afford a criterion to judge of the strength of their understandings, and the goodness of their hearts. Of these the most unfavourable is supposed to be Prosperity, which not only endangers the propriety of our conduct, but awakens that envy by which our conduct will be criticised. Misfortune, on the other hand, while it lessens our propensity to many vices and follies, produces in others that compassion from which slighter vices and follies find pardon and indulgence.

It has been your peculiar ill fortune, Sir, to meet with distressful and mortifying circumstances, which neither improved your mind, nor produced compassion for its weakness. Your

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own

own estimation of your abilities always kept pace with the proofs of your incapacity ; and you claimed from the world its respect and applause, in moments when you should have left it to forget its contempt, or to retain its indifference. In the course of the disastrous war, in which you acted so conspicuous a part, it was one great cause of our national calamities, that public shame was lost, and public indignation seemed to be asleep ; but you, Sir, came boldly forth to disclaim the one, and to provoke the other. Still, however, while you appeared to act but on the defensive, moderate and good-natured men were inclined to overlook your presumption ; and, believing you to mean no harm, and to feel no malice, were contented to smile at your self-conceit, and left the trappings of your dignity and the tinsel of your language to decorate, or at least to shade your retirement.

But of late, Sir, you have ventured on several occasions to step into the field as a challenger, and to assume a tone of censure on the actions of others, which the easier disposition of other times had not been provoked to fasten upon yours. In the recent case of *Captain Williams* in particular, you took on yourself the character of an accuser and a judge ; and, plum-
med

med in the experience of a soldier, ventured to pronounce his conduct to be *murther*. Did it never strike you, Sir, that any application could be made to yourself? or does the mention of military duty, on which you were so eloquent, touch no string that jars within you? If you are so blind to your own character; and if in that blindness you cease to be inoffensive, I shall be justified in making you a little better acquainted with that sort of estimation in which you are held by the discerning part of the world.

That part of the world; indeed, did not augur much from the habits of your early life, or conceive that the idle and dissipated society of London could fit a man for performing the duties of a general, or bearing the hardships of a soldier. There were men, however, whose levity could smile even after the disaster of *Saratoga*, who observed that your education was not ill suited to your circumstances; you had, at least, learned to bear the vicissitudes of fortune at the University of *St James's Street*: where you had acquired your *style*, it was not so easy for them to determine, unless it might be supposed, from your early propensity to Comedy, that you had borrowed it from a well-known character in Ben Jonson. But though generally very faithful in your Comic Imitations,

you had, in this, somewhat departed from your model. Every body has admired the distinction that great author has made between the stile and deportment of his *Bobadil* in the influence of prosperity, and under the pressure of mortification and disgrace. You suffered disgrace like *Bobadil*; but you did not, like him, abate the swell of your language. You told us the fate of that gallant army which your blunders had led on to defeat and captivity, in the same pompous jargon with which you announced the early success which accident had gained you, of which, by a singular felicity of misconduct, you contrived to throw away all the advantage. Classical allusion is your *forte*, and the hackneyed quotation of

“ Pauper et exsul

“ Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,”

could not but be familiar to you: but you were not in the predicament of the poor heroes of the poet; your poverty was only of the mind, your losses only those of reputation; with the insolence which often accompanies the first, and with that callousness of mind which the latter could not reach, you retained the “*ampullas et sesquipedalia verba*” still.

But men of more serious and considerate minds lamented your misfortunes as connected with

with those of your country, and pitied you when they thought how poignantly, on that account, you must feel them. They supposed you suffering every hardship incident to your ill-fated army, trebled to you by the reflection of having yourself been the principal cause of their disasters. They pictured you visiting the wounded, the sick, the dying, with all the anguish of the chief, as well as the sympathy of a man ministering assistance and comfort where you could, or at least affording them that consolation which soldiers always feel when their leader participates their distresses. What were our feelings when we saw you arrive in England! when we had understood that you had left your unhappy followers, the remains of that brave army which had so often bled, under your command, starving on the barren frontiers of Virginia, while you lived daintily at the tables of your noble friends, displayed your white teeth, and read your little verses in the Ruelles of Pall-mall and Piccadilly, or enjoyed at your ease the "Green Delights" of the Oaks, which your sportive muse was then contriving to celebrate!

All this, Sir, admitted but of one palliation; that vacancy or dissipation of mind, which does not listen to the voice of honourable fame, or

of honest censure. But in the late instance which I have mentioned above, you have shown that this was a mistake. You have stated yourself a critic in military duty, and laid down principles for its extent and regulation. But when, in your acrimonious charge against Capt. Williams, you applied the word *murder* to the execution of a single villain like Mustapha, had you thought of any term to express the abandonment of thousands of innocent Americans to the Indian tomahawk? Had you forgotten a proclamation, in which the only thing its bombastic obscurity left intelligible was the bloody proscription which it authorised? Poets have been often supposed to paint from their own resemblance, to transfuse their own sentiments into the persons of their dramas; thence I suppose it is, that we hear from you dissertations on humanity in war, and from your friend Mr Sheridan eulogiums on public integrity and economy.

The person who now addresses you, Sir, is no party-writer, and this is the first time he ever corresponded with a News-paper; but "*facit indignatio versus.*" Amidst the quiet of his distant residence, he still feels for that country which your former temerity disgraced, and for that innocent individual, (as he in his conscience

ence believes him) whom you would now sacrifice to the pride of your eloquence, or the virulence of your party. When the injustice of that party is loud enough to reach him in his retirement, he cannot help resenting it on behalf of the injured. He knows the ridiculousness of egotism almost as well as you, Sir; but he may be allowed to assume some importance for his sentiments, when he knows them to be the sentiments of every worthy and respectable man in the country. If you or your friends again provoke his honest indignation, you may again hear from

BRUTUS.

April 16th 1790.

LETTER II.

To R. B. S*****, Esq.

SIR,

IT is the boast of our free government, that neither great wealth nor distinguished rank are necessary to obtain or to enjoy the highest honours of the state; that abilities and integrity are requisites sufficient for the attainment of all to which ambition can aspire, unsupported by any blazon but the public applause, and resting on no title but the opinion of the people.

This wisely democratic principle of our constitution, like all other wise and good principles, is liable to abuse. Demagogues have frequently arisen, who have been lifted by the tide of popularity into heights of which they were unworthy; who have misled the public into the applause or censure of measures, not from their merit or demerit, but as those measures were friendly or adverse to the interested views of those leaders of the multitude. Adventurers have arisen in Parliament, whose assurance supplies the want of information, and whose powers

ers in debate cover their weakness and sophistry in argument. There are speakers, as well as soldiers, of fortune; and the first, like the latter, are ready to undertake any service, however desperate, by which they may push themselves into Preferment.

Under this description, Sir, if you shall be classed, you may boast at least of a somewhat honourable introduction. Your wit, and the gaiety, if not the graces of your manner, attracted the notice and conciliated the favour of a fashionable circle, who fostered the projects of your ambition, while they listed you under the banners of their party. Ladies are quick in their conclusions, and look not deeply into consequences: When the fair Dutchess made you member for Stafford, she only thought of the bon mots she had heard you utter, of the comic scenes with which your Muse had delighted her. Her Grace was younger than Hecuba, and had no old woman's dream, like Hecuba's, of bringing forth a fire-brand.

You have had the merit, Sir, of making more of the advantages which this accidental patronage had given you, than the most sanguine of your admirers could have ventured to suppose. Habit and perseverance have conquered the original stiffness of your manner, and the hesitation.

tion of your utterance. The natural liveliness of your imagination and brilliancy of your wit, furnished you with imagery to seduce the passions, and ridicule to excite the mirth of your audience ; and you superadded to those willing endowments of your nature the occasional exertions of study, attention, calculation, and enquiry, which your indolence and love of pleasure must have rendered irksome to you. Your industry has sought out subjects of debate, as well as weapons of argument. You courted the *Scots Reform*, a Drab who was willing to be won, and whose turbulent spirit was congenial to your own. You wooed the West India merchants, who rather coyly refused your addresses, from an idea, perhaps, (for it is not easy to conceive the versatility of your talents) that so determined a champion of freedom could not possibly harangue against the emancipation of the negroes. You wedded the tobaccoists, and sealed your contract by a five hours speech on so trite a subject as the extension of the Excise. From these, and other such sincere and patriotic exertions, your flatterers have wove for you a kind of civic crown, and given you a title highly honourable in a commercial country, ' the Tradesman's Friend.' You have revived the old Roman connexion of *patron* and *client* :
like

like the orators of old, your clients the tradesmen beset your door of a morning ; they would bring too, after the Roman custom, their presents, but they have already bestowed them ; for you have taken care that every thing you have received from them has been a present, if every thing is a present that is not paid for.

Those tradesmen who have entered into this bond of *friendship* with you, are not perhaps aware of all its privileges. You had friends in the *Opera* : let them ask Mr Taylor ; he is now at liberty (you will pardon the pun) to tell the value of such a friend. You had friends in the *Theatre* ; if ever Dr Ford's creditors allow him to return from abroad, he can inform them of the advantages to be derived from your friendship. Your friendship to the tradesmen is on the same side of the account ; only, in the language of arithmeticians, it is of a higher denomination.

These, however, were private connections, which perhaps are beneath the notice of the public. But you have some friendships of a higher kind, which involved objects the most important and momentous, the dignity of the Monarch, the welfare of the people. The effect of such a connexion we are entitled to trace,
and

and it is probable your pride will be flattered while we trace it. You derived this, like other distinctions, from a female title; and, had it been exercised only on female subjects, the *petits soupers* of C——n or C———d House, or had it only regulated the business of Brooks's or New-market, we should have looked on it as one of those trivial connexions, those 'humours of his idleness,' which, though serious men might regret, it were rather cynical to blame. But you were almost the single member of his cabinet, when subjects of the highest moment were agitated; subjects, that were to mark his character as a son, a p—e, and citizen. With easy natures, and at a certain time of life, to be counselled is to be governed; you are therefore responsible for the conduct of your illustrious friend in all these characters.

As to *filial* obligations, I am willing to allow, that from your own mind or conduct you could not easily draw conceptions of their force; but possessing the imagination of a poet, you might have created a character you never felt, and made your friend somewhat a different son to a father more indulgent than yours.

In a public capacity it were an irksome and ungracious task to retrace that conduct which you prompted, and would recall to our remembrance

brance a period of national fear and uneasiness which, we hope, no future time will equal. There were, however, some advantages derived from those evils. Virtues and talents were displayed on which the people could build future trust; on both sides were such virtues and talents exhibited; the D. of P——d, with an integrity and a spirit worthy of his high character, shewed that there were conditions on which he would not stoop to hold the highest station of the empire.

In this intended first public act of administration, in which “your little bark was to sail attendant, was to

“Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale,”

it was not the money which the people regarded: to have paid your debts as an individual was a calculable expence on the revenue; but to have paid them as the debts of a copartnery, was as humiliating as it was corrupt, and led to an idea of connection, of which the danger could not be calculated. It has been the fashion of late to make allusions from a great ancient to a great modern name; and the hero of *Agincourt* has been quoted in vindication of youthful levities which maturer age is to cure. Have you had no part in this dramatic allusion? “Rob me the Exchequer the first thing you do.”

do." But you have less comedy in your figure, and more seriousness in your designs than *Falstaff*; and therefore such an advice from you excited graver emotions. In the society of dissipation, a young man risks more than his money; he stakes his feeling, his principle, his sense of private virtue, and of public duty.

But you are skilful in the ridicule of sentiment, and will perhaps laugh at this as the cant of hypocrisy. But no—you have of late assumed that tone yourself, and have *preached* from the Manager's box in Westminster-Hall, and from your place in the House of Commons. In Westminster-Hall, indeed, your speeches were exhibitions merely; and when you declaimed against ambition, venality, and the filial inhumanity of the *Begum's* son, we conceived no more relation between the speech and the speaker, than when mild Mr *Bensley* personates a murderer, or honest Mr *Parsons* represents a pickpocket. But do not carry this matter too far. An *establishment* of virtues is expensive, and may puzzle even you to keep. In the House of Commons, and applied personally to yourself, you must beware of talking so much of the danger of lotteries and gaming, and of the consciousness of honour, of principle, and of virtue. I know you don't allow much penetration

netration to the country gentlemen ; but they have memories, and know the meaning of those old-fashioned country vocables. Be advised, Sir, to safer pretensions. Shut up your virtues, like greenhouse plants, to expand only in sunshine ; lock them up, as your friends the tradesmen do their bills, to be discharged in more fortunate times. Keep your purity and honour for the *Secretaryship at War* ; or preserve your integrity and economy for the *Treasurership of the Navy*.

BRUTUS,

May 3d 1790.

LETTER III.

*To the Right Hon. E. B****.*

S I R,

PARTY-WRITERS have so accustomed us to expect abuse in addresses of this sort, that I am obliged to preface this letter with a declaration, that I am more an admirer of your good qualities than an observer of your failings. In the distant retirement of private life, political opinions are mellowed into speculative mildness, and do not rise in our bosoms with that personal acrimony which sets down a man's character merely from his party. Though I feel with, I believe, a very great majority of my fellow citizens, much respect and gratitude to men against whom you have been long in opposition, yet I am neither blind to their imperfections nor to your merits. When their imperfections shall appear to diminish their usefulness to the public, I will speak my opinion with the same regret with which I have seen your merits rendered useless or hurtful to it. I feel for my country, Sir; and I am grieved when, on either

her side, virtues or talents are lost to its service, or misapplied to its prejudice.

In my sense of your merits, Sir, I own I indulge a certain degree of vanity. It is not a vulgar mind they can affect or attach. You have been unfortunate in the exertion of your talents: possessing popular virtues and popular abilities; your public conduct and public appearances have but seldom won the suffrages of the people. There was a refinement in your virtue, an abstraction in your eloquence, which it required something of a philosopher and a scholar to relish; plain men denied the one, and did not always understand the other. Hence, perhaps, arose the ridiculous fable of your education at *St Omer's*, and your being designed for a member of a religious order some time ago abolished in the greatest part of Europe; a story which had less foundation than almost any other in the mythology of the vulgar. You had the genius and the learning, but you wanted the prudence and the address of the Society of *Jesús*. They contrived to work upon mankind by the dextrous management of ordinary powers: you lost men by the mismanagement of great and uncommon endowments.

From the time of *Swift* downwards, the remark of the superior fitness of coarse and ordi-

nary minds to the plain operations of business, has been often repeated. In the House of Commons, which you early chose for the field of your ambition, the same thing takes place: there is often a point below eloquence at which men must stand who would wish to persuade or to lead that assembly. That in this business-kind of speaking you should not greatly excel; that you should not always conjoin accuracy of deduction with fertility of invention, nor be as clear in a statement of figures as glowing in an appeal to the passions, is what we naturally expect from the different formation of different minds. There are few, very few men indeed, the variety of whose powers can accommodate itself to the sense of the plain, the calculations of the plodding, the vivacity of the fanciful; whose language has perspicuity for the dullest understanding, and brilliancy for the most lively imagination; whose speeches have demonstration for the reasoner and logician, and flow for the ears of the vacant and the thoughtless. These are endowments which Nature bestows but seldom, though she happens to have gifted with them each of the present leaders of the opposite parties in parliament.

But it was not only from the abstractions of philosophy or the refinements of learning that
you

you disgusted your audience; it was often from an intemperance which philosophy should have restrained, from a grossness which learning should have corrected. In the course of the prosecution against Mr H——, you trespassed equally against justice, humanity, and decorum. Surely, Sir, the moral and elegant systems in which you are so conversant, should have suggested the impropriety of that conduct which you and some of your brother managers adopted. Mr H—— stood before them a prisoner, under that protection which an obligation to silent sufferance should have afforded him with generous minds. His accusers were invested with a high character, the representatives of the Commons of Great Britain: the tribunal they addressed consisted (abstractly speaking) of every thing that was venerable and august. Was that a place for rancour or scurrility, for ribaldry or railing? You, Sir, in particular, had the calm dignity to support of one who sought to assert the rights of mankind, to vindicate the honour of Englishmen. You came not there in the situation of some of your colleagues, to wipe away the impeachment of vice in themselves by the declamation of virtue; to obliterate the memory of dishonesty by eulogiums on honour, and to take from public mischief and

diffension that general chance of advantage which desperate incendiaries hope for amidst the conflagration they have raised. It may perhaps wound your peculiar and allowable pride, to be accused of as much want of taste as of compassion or propriety. You reversed the well-known compliment to *Virgil*, who was said "to toss about his dung with majesty;" you borrowed her flowers from rhetoric, and, soiling them with ordure, threw them in the faces of your noble and venerable judicature, of your high-bred and beautiful auditory. I leave out of this account all doubts of the justice of your charge, because I give you credit for a belief of its justice. Yet in doing so, I fear I must deduct as much from your penetration as I allow to your integrity. How else should it happen that the only objects of your persecution have been those who have successfully served their country; that your blind humanity should have champion'd itself in the cause of the cheats of *St Eustatia*, and the blackguards of *Bengal*; against men who had saved the British possessions in both Indies from the ruin and disgrace which some of your friends had suffered to overwhelm them in other parts of the world?

Moderate men, who know and value you, are astonished at the vehemence of your stile,
and

and the violence of your conduct in public, when they compare it with that candour and that gentleness which conciliate so many friends to you in private. But it needs less metaphysical knowledge than you possess, less knowledge of life than my age has taught me, to account for this phenomenon. When the mind is imbued with a particular turn of thinking which it has indulged into a habit; with the audience that rouses, the exertion that warms, the party that inflames; against all these circumstances combined, it requires more soundness of judgment than men of your genius are commonly blessed with, to keep the just and even ballance of conduct and demeanour: yet humanity should never leave us, because in a good man it is that instinctive principle which nothing should overpower for a moment. There was a time, Sir, when you forgot its call; a remarkable period, when distress and infirmity were seen in such elevated place, that the visitation of heaven was marked with national awe and depression. I forbear to recal the general indignation, or to raise the blush on your own cheek which a repetition of the expressions you then used must occasion. For this also you wanted the apology some others might have pleaded; you knew the tenderness of a parent,

the comforts of a family, the connexion of a worthy and honourable society. You had no abandoned your heart to play, nor lived a wretched dependent on the prostitution of character, on the wreck of principle. But you had leased out your humanity to faction! Party-rage had stifled your natural sensibility, and you forgot the man in the monarch. Yet they who are willing to blame you will quote that parade of feeling which you detailed for the misfortunes of Asiatic princes, of whom the names and description threw a ridicule over the pomp of your pity. I will answer, since I have no better apology, that here also it was the rage of party still.

The rage of party, Sir, is unworthy of your talents, and unbecoming your character. It levels your genius and your virtue with men whose petulance undervalues the first, whose profligacy ridicules the latter. In my respect for virtue, in my pride of letters, I cannot bear the advantage which, on this ground, the dissipated, the worthless, the ignorant have over you. Resume the place which nature, education, your own sentiments, and the sentiments of good men would assign you. Do not peevishly (as I have sometimes heard you propose) retire from that post in which you may still be useful to your country.

country. We have not, amidst our recollection of some weak or censurable appearances, forgotten the merit of your better exertions. With the force of a scholar's stile, with the richness of a poet's imagination, you have formerly, and may again correct the errors or expose the abuses of public measures. Be but just to yourself, to your talents, to your fame. You have lived long enough to contention and cabal. I speak, Sir, with the sympathy of a coeval. The struggle for place, the bickerings of faction, are at no time very dignified occupations; but at our time of life, and to a man like you, they are particularly degrading; when against the paltry emoluments, or trifling distinctions of a few joyless years, they stake the happiness of present peace of mind, and the reputation of future ages.

BRUTUS.

May 12th, 1790.

LETTER IV.

*To H. R. H. the P. of W****.*

S I R,

IN absolute monarchies, all communication of sentiment between the Sovereign and the people is cut off by the terrors of despotism. Personal familiarity, indeed, the Prince may allow to a few favoured individuals, more safely than in freer governments, because the distance of political situation prevents all danger of that want of reverence and respect which is fatal to dignity. In monarchies more limited, the Sovereign and his family rely on the confidence and affection of the people; a fealty of a more generous and valuable kind, which the higher rank deserves by its virtues, and the lower yields from a reasonable and independent conviction of them. Flattery it is in the power of slaves to bestow, but fame is the gift only of freemen.

When I advance these truths to a Prince of the House of *Brunswick*, I cannot be in danger of his displeasure; and I know too well the peculiar condescension of him whom I now take the liberty of addressing to doubt his acceptance
of

of that honest tribute which I offer him, of approbation mixed with counsel, of attachment to his person and his family, joined to a wish and a hope that his conduct may always deserve it. With a peculiar complacency of disposition you have thrown aside the distance of rank and the reserve of royalty ; you have opened not only the actions of your public, but the habits of your private life, to the view of the people ; and disdaining to impose on them by the weight of your name or the parade of your dignity, have conciliated their affections by the charms of your appearance and the graces of your manner. If there has been sometimes a small degree of error or excess in this affability and condescension, we are disposed rather to regret than to censure it : we regret the accident of its misapplication, but we are not inclined to blame the exercise of it in you. The sunshine that gives to the breeze its health and to the fields their verdure, breeds at the same time the useless weed and noxious exhalation. We complain of the weed and the exhalation, but he must be a peevish misanthrope indeed who quarrels with the sunshine.

Sober reasoners, however, may perhaps dispute the justice of my simile ; they will tell us of the difference between the seeming imperfec-
tions

tions of the natural, and the real imperfections of the moral world, and point out the latter as subjects of correction and amendment, which it is the province of wisdom to discover and of goodness to remove. In the instance alluded to, your talents are equal to the discovery, and your prudence as well as virtue, they trust, will prompt the correction. There are persons on whom your favour and friendship are bestowed, whom, even amidst the adulation with which it is the misfortune of princes to be deceived, you will easily discover to be unworthy of that favour and friendship. You have mixed enough with the world to be able to judge of men; and, in this country, the channel of public opinion is sufficiently open to the highest personages, even without the advantage of your accessibility to obtain it. The people have too much reverence for your name to apply their common traditionary adages to the effects of society upon character; but though the communication may not hurt you, it affects the public, doubly affects it, if the unworthy are brought forward into place and distinction, and the deserving excluded from stations which they ought to have filled.

We know, Sir, at the same time, and make allowance for that society which naturally fastens

tens itself on a young man's freer hours ; and do not expect that, amidst amusement or festivity, there should always be an unexceptionable selection of his companions or his guests. There is a distinction which will readily be made between that circle with which men of high rank and important stations unbend their leisure, and that with which they trust their serious moments. " Nobody, said the Frenchman, is a hero to his *valet de chambre* ;" and he who should attempt it would be very little of a hero to any one else. But the valet de chambre who dresses, or the idle companion who amuses a great man, are mere appendages of his private dressing-room or parlour, with whom, if they keep in their proper place, the public has nothing to do, and after whom it will never inquire. But if they counsel him in important affairs, if they lead him in momentous or delicate situations, he must be accountable for his misplaced and preposterous attachment, and the public which it injures will be entitled to complain of its effects. Nothing has been more fatal to princes than this predilection for weak and unworthy men ; and the history of mankind is one continued lesson of the danger to greatness in being made the dupe of its
private

private attachments, when they are not restrained by prudence nor regulated by virtue.

The annals of our own country are not silent on that subject. You, Sir, I believe, have heard them quoted in excuse, if not in compliment, of some youthful levities for which the good-humour of Englishmen is glad to find an apology. *Eastcheap* has been cited for the credit of *Parliament-street*, and *Gadshill* drawn into precedent for the honour of *Newmarket*: but if there is any scholiast on *Shakespeare* who has the *entrée* to your library, let him not forget the expression of “*unyoked idleness*” which the youthful *Henry* indulged with his associates. There was an extravagance in the pranks of *Falstaffe* and *Poins* that might impeach the dignity, but did not taint the character of their illustrious companion. The excursive sallies of the Prince were made into the regions of absurdity, foreign to that place which his birth entitled him to hold, or those duties which it called on him to perform; his follies hung upon him like a masquing dress which the mummery of the hour put on, and the serious occupations of his own person and character laid aside. Your companions, Sir, if not all of a higher rank than *Harry Monmouth's*, had in general deeper and more important designs.

They

They did not, amid the joviakty of wine or the gaiety of pleasure, doff the cares of life, or mock the toils of ambition. Theirs, was not always the honest, joyous vacancy of thoughtless mirth; like the *Athenian* heroes, beneath the roses of the feast they hid the arms of their ambition; but they did not, like the *Athenian* heroes, use them against the *enemies* of their country.

One particular juncture there was which might have afforded an apology for men of less foresight than them, to think of using the connection which youth and inexperience had formed to purposes of interest and advancement; when the diadem hovered over the head of their patron, and when indeed, but for some error in their political measures, its power and authority might have been his. That juncture was attended with circumstances of so extraordinary a kind as to form an æra in the political history of the kingdom. When disease and infirmity invaded the throne, the distress of the Sovereign was felt as a private calamity, which interested the feelings of every individual, without relation to his political rights, or the political interests of the community; not only the loyalty of subjects, but the affection, the sympathy of men were excited by this calamity.

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In this calamity they looked to you, Sir, with feelings of a similar kind, ready to acknowledge the public merits of the Prince, or the private virtues of the son. In distress, men's hearts are easily won: if you failed to win them, it must have been owing to some imprudence in that surrounding circle, through the medium of whose character the characters of princes are always seen. It could not be owing to any fault in your own disposition, gracious at all times, and then peculiarly called on to exercise the best qualities of your nature—kindness, compassion, filial attention, and filial reverence. The thoughtless and unprincipled dissipation of some of that circle, might have, at such a period, been supposed to watch the bed of sickness with malignant expectation, to scoff at the distress of those around it, and to make matter for wretched and scurril jests of the most severe of all human afflictions. In a public view, they might have been supposed to have caught, with a blind and rapacious eagerness, this opportunity of gratifying their avarice or ambition; in the triumph of sudden elevation, to have forgot decency; and, in the insolence of anticipated power, to have despised moderation. Bankrupt alike in fortune and in character, some of them might have been imagined capable of every

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ry extremity to which desperate circumstances and determined profligacy might excite; and having nothing to lose, and nothing to feel with the country, to have been equally unrestrained by prudence and by sentiment.

Your sentiments, Sir, and your deportment, we knew by our own. Struck with the solemn melancholy of the national distress, you felt it doubled in your own individual affliction. At the age when feeling is acute, when interest and ambition have hardly learned the value of their objects, you thought less of the public dignity to which this calamitous event might call you, than of the private sorrow by which it was to be accompanied. Of political opinions, you adopted the most temperate; of political measures, you proposed the least violent: you did not wish to add to the depression of the public by the fear of sudden change, or the dread of civil dissension. You knew that the influence and power which a different conduct might obtain were as unsafe to a prudent, as disagreeable to a good mind; that in the opposite scale were placed every thing that wisdom or virtue in a Prince could desire; all the confidence, the love, the glory, which a generous people could offer to his acceptance.

To

To the joy of the nation, as to your's, Sir, this calamity "overpassed us like a summer cloud," and our fears were lost before we could well ascertain them. The country was freed from a situation of uncertainty and of danger that shook its credit and its quiet, and you were left, we hope, (and we know you hope) many years longer to the exercise of those engaging and amiable qualities that are hardly allowed to expand under the weight and pressure of state affairs.

In your present situation, Sir, you have many opportunities, which we are persuaded you will improve, of rendering essential service to your country. Your favour and example can encourage genuine patriotism, can promote public honour and public virtue; without the responsibility of official power, your patronage can call merit into action, and prompt the reward of its exertions. Keep but the purity of your influence unfulled, preserve its dignity unimpaired, and you can weave the civic crown for the statesman, and his laurel wreath for the soldier.

In former times, of which some curious records are left us, the heir-apparent of the Crown has been induced to lend himself to a factious cabal, to become a king of the "shreds and patches"

patches" of Opposition, who prostituted his name to their own little purposes, who abused his confidence, and made a vile stewardship of his weakness for their own private advantage. To such arts greatness must always be liable; and it is, perhaps, rather a compliment to your good-nature than an impeachment on your understanding, if we venture to caution you against them. In your situation you cannot know their effects; you cannot see them as we do in distant provinces, and amidst the mass of the people. You know not what despicable associates the *Cressy* standard assembles, over what impurities the plumage of your crest is made to wave; yet popular prejudice will often lay these abuses to your charge, though in that encouragement, to which the easiness of your nature allows them, you cannot foresee the mischiefs they produce. The noblest tree of the forest is not always shaken by the winds, or scathed by the lightning of heaven; it suffers, ignobly suffers, from the vermin that shelter at its root.

In a private capacity, your humility will not probably allow you to suppose how much is in your power for the manners and the happiness of the community. With the advantages you derive from nature, with the accomplishments

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you have received from education, you have for some time been acknowledged

“ The glass of fashion and the mold of form ; ”

and there is a sort of dominion annexed to this idea, which, though of a lighter kind, is of greater extent and importance than some others which men are more solicitous to possess. I am no Cynic preacher, and will not suppose that, at your time of life, and with your temperament you are to regulate your conduct and deportment by the rules of cold-blooded age and sober wisdom. But there is a decorum in pleasure, a temperance even in dissipation, which, amidst all the extravagance of the moment, marks the feeling of a man of sense and a gentleman ; a something even about his idlest indulgences which speaks the folly to belong to him, and not him to the folly. The words, *gentleman* and *man of fashion*, will borrow their meaning, within a certain circle, from you ; but there is an intrinsic sense of the terms which will still be the understanding of the people. Consider, Sir, that, with all the witchery of your manners and address, the sphere of your attraction is limited, the sphere of your fame extensive. Sacrifice a little to the judgment, or, if your gayer friends will call it so, the prejudice of
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of those whose judgment is one day to be so important to you. Remember that no power, even in the most arbitrary governments, was ever equal to his who could wield at will the *opinions* of his subjects.

BRUTUS.

May 21st 1790.

LETTER V.

*To the Right Hon. C. J. F**.*

S I R,

THE irregularities of genius have been so often observed that it has at length become almost proverbial to associate a want of prudence with the possession of a brilliant imagination. We easily pardon in others, and excuse in ourselves, an eccentricity of conduct which we suppose connected with the warmth of feeling or the energies of fancy, and set down propriety and discretion as homely qualities, to be valued, perhaps, but not to be envied.

If brilliancy of talents could excuse their misdirection, you, Sir, of all men living, might plead that apology. The variety of powers with which your mind is endowed; the extent of your knowledge, with the vivacity of your imagination; the logical closeness of your reasoning, with that overwhelming torrent of eloquence in which it is conveyed; the rapidity of your thought, with the accuracy of your perception; the intuitive and lightning glance of your own observation, with your just and clear conception

tion of that of others—altogether form a combination which astonishes equally and delights the observer.

But it is by the application, rather than the possession of abilities, that men are useful or respectable in life; and this maxim holds particularly true with regard to public men, to whom discretion in the conduct of their talents is more absolutely essential than to others, in proportion to the extent of their influence, and the importance as well as delicacy of the situations in which they are placed. In the course of your political life, Sir, such situations have been uncommonly frequent; and it was highly favourable to the celebrity as well as to the development of your abilities, that they rose in a period more eventful than almost any other in the annals of Great Britain, or in the history of Europe.

In those situations, Sir, the public has not perhaps always done justice to your conduct. In the national temper of England there is a downright openness and good-nature, which allows much to purity of intention, which pardons many errors in its respect for general good character; while, on the other hand, it is always disposed to detract from abilities or success, if unaccompanied with these estimable

qualities. Your great opponent, so long (alas ! much too long) in administration, possessed the virtues of temperament, which, though they were often vices to his country, its generosity trusted and approved ; and it looked with complacency on his amiable domestic character, to which the tenor of your life, and the complexion of your society, were known to be adverse. Your opposition to him was supposed to be grounded on personal resentment. Your opposition to his measures was attributed only to the turbulence of faction. The public had just begun to feel his demerits, when your coalition with him took place ; a coalition which the people felt as individuals, and could not, in the antipathy of that feeling, allow for party-combination or political expediency. You suffered thus alike from their indulgence and their censure of that unfortunate minister ; and they gave credit to the justice of your former accusations against him, only at that moment when your ill-forted junction laid you under the mortifying necessity of retracting them. But on the subject of Lord N--- the public indignation has ceased, and we will not awaken it ; though we may be allowed, with a retrospective sigh for national disaster, or a smile at national credulity, to wonder that so weak an agent could
occasion

occasion so giant a mischief to his country. That country, in its wonted good-nature, and with a certain reverence for misfortune and infirmity, of which he has not always shewn them an example, has allowed his age to remain unquestioned; has left him undisturbed to the quietism of his nature, if haply it may sooth the pangs of recollection, or blunt the dread of that obloquy with which posterity will cover his name. Or perhaps he owes much of this indulgence to the circumstance of being so fortunate in a successor—" *Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.*" We are unwilling to disturb the present prosperity of the nation with a recollection of its distresses, or of those wretched ministers by whom they were occasioned.

From this natural and commendable propensity in the people to enhance or to lessen the public merits of men according to their private dispositions, or private character, you have suffered a disadvantage which has counterbalanced all your natural endowments, and all your acquired information, great and extraordinary as we are willing to admit them. It is not sufficient for you to answer, that much of the blame imputed to you in this respect is unjust and ill-founded; for your friends to tell us of the candour of your mind, the benevolence of your

heart, the warmth and disinterestedness of your friendship. Did the public give them credit for their assertions, it would still reply, Why waste those qualities on objects so improper? why degrade them by an association with men so unworthy? But the public is general in its conclusions, and cannot easily suppose particular exceptions to rules which experience has established. The people look to that circle of which you form a part, and involve you in that general colour it assumes to their eye. They cannot couple dissipation and business, and do not easily associate deep gaming and scrupulous integrity. Some of your friends publicly disclaim gaming, and are content to cheat without it: You play with that gentleman-like fairness which marks every part of your conduct; yet with the million, those friends of yours have the merit of their abstinence from play, while you derive none from that honour with which your indulgence in play is accompanied. The profession of play, like every other profession against which public virtue or public prejudice is armed, subjects to the general obloquy of the calling every individual, however honourably he may exercise it. Nor is it often that this general opinion of the public is erroneous; *imputed* degradation is commonly productive

ductive of the *real*; and an association with the mean or the worthless, if it does not corrupt us into vice, will at least blunt our feelings of virtue.

Some of your acquaintance will smile at the word *virtue*, when applied to political situation; but this is not the cant of fanaticism; it is the voice of truth and of reason, and a minister of England must hear and obey it. It is for the honour of our country that even private moral rectitude goes so much to the credit of public men, that we can scarce recollect a popular minister who was not possessed, or supposed to be possessed of it. But there are certain virtues that may be termed *ministerial*, which a statesman must possess in order to be trusted. Industry, attention, integrity, and economy, are qualities essential to his situation; and though it is possible that he may take them up, as he does the seals of his office, for the public use merely, while in his private capacity he never thinks of exercising them; yet the people will hardly confide in this occasional conformity, but will rather suppose that the habits of his life will outweigh the duties of the hour, and the bonds of his society be stronger than the obligations of his business. The few who are acquainted with the force of the pliability of his mind,

mind, may conceive him to be above the debasement of his ordinary occupations, or the contagion of his favourite company ; but the public imagination is less ductile, and will not so suddenly lose the irreverent ideas it has formed of a man's private manners and private connexions.

You will easily apply these general positions, Sir ; you applied them indeed, already, during the short time you and your friends were in administration ; you assumed the grave and serious deportment which you knew was suitable to your office ; you put on the externals of decorum with scrupulous attention ; but the public opinion was refractory, and we did not trust our fight against the conviction of our understanding. The solemn suit and its dignified appendages only recalled to our remembrance the blue frock and the familiar rattan ; and we saw still at your side some persons who were only entitled to be there from their participation of those looser hours in which surely nothing was to be acquired that could fit men for the high offices of the State. We regretted this in your former, and feared it in your future advancement. Unless divorced from your former connexions, you must have risen into power, as the vulgar suppose of comets, with a noxious atmosphere around

around you, to blight the credit of the state, and to taint the purity of public administration.

The minister of a great empire has other opinions to gain besides those of his own countrymen. The credit of Britain is one of the proudest circumstances in the comparison between her and the surrounding nations. You know, Sir, for you were abroad at a critical juncture, the effect which the virtue of a minister has on that credit; they are polite on the Continent; and it might possibly not reach *your* ears how much that credit might be lessened by his vices or his dissipation.

I am afraid you have thrown away your talents, as well as sullied your reputation, by your adherence to men who were often as unfortunate in the objects they pursued as in the conduct they held. You have exhibited your eloquence with the dexterity of a prize-fighter rather than the dignity of a champion for truth; owing, perhaps, to that situation in which you had the misfortune to be placed, the most admirable of its exertions oftener pleased than persuaded, oftener astonished than pleased. You indulged a subtlety in argument which sometimes vanquished your adversaries in debate; but, like other barren conquests, rather gained
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an increase of glory than an extent of power. Your audience contrived to separate the debater from the man, and lavished its applause on the first, without bestowing its commendation on the latter.

This letter, Sir, is addressed to you by one who is of no party but that of truth; who is attached to no interests but those of his country. Did personal attachment or acquaintance weigh with him, he has known you enough to be fascinated by your society, and has felt the chilling virtue and unconciliating pride of some of your opponents. He calls to you "with a friendly voice," for the sake of his country, to which your wonderful talents have been hitherto almost unproductive. In modern men of your rank, talents, any ways approaching to yours, are of a rarity that enhances their value, and the public cannot spare them to idleness, to intemperance, or to faction. We would call, Sir, on the patriotism of the citizen; or if that claim should appear too general, we would rouse the pride of the man. Did heaven form a soul like yours, and endow it with powers so exalted, to calculate the throws at Brookes's or to measure the ground at Newmarket? Think of yourself more worthily, Sir; leave those provinces to the Dukes of *Piccadilly* or *Bloomsbury*, or to any other

other Dukes or Lords, whose reputation no mean-
 ness can lower, whose minds no insignificance
 of employment can debase. But for you, Sir,
 thus to misemploy your talents, is a suicide of
 the mind, impious to heaven, and unjust to
 yourself and your country. Think how many
 events may arise to call them into important
 stations, when the war of parties shall have
 ceased, when personal distinctions shall be for-
 gotten. Political prosperity is of very uncertain
 duration; and to states as to individuals, pros-
 perity itself has its dangers. In opposition, or in
 power, your supereminent abilities must always
 be valuable, if you will but know their value,
 and point their use: but while you sink the one
 and pervert the other, though we may afford
 you our admiration or our regret, we cannot
 bestow our respect or our confidence.

BRUTUS.

May 31st, 1796.

LETTER VI.

*To the Right Hon. E. B****.*

S I R,

WHEN I some time ago took occasion to address you, I recommended, with an honest wish for your fame, the application of your talents to nobler objects than the contentions of party politics, "*the struggle for place, or the bickerings of faction.*" I called upon you to exert the powers you are acknowledged to possess, "the force of a scholar's stile, the richness of a poet's imagination, to correct the errors or expose the abuses of public measures." It flatters me to see that you have fulfilled the wish I then formed on your behalf: your treatise on the *French Revolution* has evinced the fullest possession of your abilities, and shewed them pointed to an object of such magnitude in the history of mankind, as fully deserved to call them forth.

In this performance you have preserved all the sensibility, bordering on enthusiasm, which
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has been always characteristic of your happiest political appearances. Feeling as a Christian for religion, as a Gentleman for honourable distinction, as a Man for the distresses of the unfortunate, you will be pardoned for painting in strong, and perhaps exaggerated colours, the injustice which, in your opinion, all of them have suffered from the present Democracy of France. Many of your readers will coincide with your opinions; all of them will relish your wit and your imagery; your style, even in its defects, will find warm admirers: these decorations of your work I will not stop to criticise or to applaud; I have certainly found more, much more room for applause than for criticism; but I will venture a few remarks which have struck me, in a first perusal of your work, on some of its general principles, and its representation of that very striking event of which it treats.

Nothing seems to me more just than your developement of the great leading truths of our constitution, and of that renewal or restoration of its principles which took place at the revolution in 1688. I have heard that this part of your work has surprised and hurt some of your Whig friends and admirers. But I confess that I have not been able to find in it any offence

offence against the principles of reasonable Whiggism; if, as a party-man you have sometimes been considered as professing a zeal in that respect, beyond the moderation of your present performance, it will remain to be determined on which side truth and reason lies; and whether the sober confession of your Faith, in this publication, be an apostacy or a conversion.

In treating of the proceedings of the National Assembly of France, and of the new constitution which they wish to establish, you do not seem quite so moderate and impartial. The Government of a great nation is a machine of so much complexity, that objections, and those too of magnitude, will easily occur to a mind less acute, and less inventive than yours. Objections will arise more easily against the operations of a republican, or any thing near a republican government, than against those of a monarchy.—Absolute power is that pervading energy which simplifies every thing. Give it but the adjuncts of wisdom, justice, and benevolence, and nothing is so delightful to imagination. You know, Sir, that mythology and poetry have always adopted it, because in their hands it is simple, beautiful, and sublime. The difficulty of modelling a new government of
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this sort is one great reason why reformers have, as you observe, generally contented themselves with only improving on the old system, and have kept as much of that remaining as the immediate feeling of oppression or inconvenience would allow. But the change must always be greater in proportion to the depravity of the former government. The constitution of England, when our ancestors re-established it at the Revolution, had sustained some injuries from the weakness or bigotry of the monarch, which could be removed without much violence; that of France had abuses inherent in its principle which could not so easily be done away. To use your own favourite allusion, the English constitution had only suffered some dilapidations which it was not difficult to repair: the French was rotten at the foundation, and it required a great deal of pulling down to remedy the mischief.

You allow nothing to the violence inseparable from the application of this remedy. You forget the resistance of the king to the first proceedings of the National Assembly, which unavoidably produced this violence; the dismissal of M. Neckar; the manifesto from Versailles; the army of Marshal Broglio. Those measures of strong coercion were necessarily op-

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posed

posed by exertions of equal force; and in such conflicts, in the shock of heated and contending parties, not only delicacy and decorum, but even justice and humanity are sometimes forgotten. Even after the contest is at an end, the principle of violence will continue to operate; the storm may have ceased, but the swell of the ocean will remain.

With the people, especially, that violence will continue, and new authority will not easily be able to repress it. The national quickness and vivacity of France runs out easily into extremes; the sentiment of the moment catches with rapidity, and hurries into excess. There is a sentiment, even of cruelty, among the French, which has often been remarked with astonishment in so civilized a people. It was this sentiment which prompted their inhuman applause, when *Damien's* first shriek attested the skill of the executioner. They looked on the assassin of their king, and uttered this barbarous plaudit at his tortures. 'Twas a *Vive le roi* in a savage stile; that *Vive le roi* which made them of old forget their country; you need not wonder that, at present, the *Vive la nation* makes them forget their king.

Yet those outrages, which every good man like you must regret, to which feeling and eloquence

quence like yours can give so much dramatic effect, have not, perhaps, been so frequent, or so great as might have been expected in a period of such commotion and tumult. The force that could wrench its sceptre from despotism could not be exerted with the ease and smoothness of regular and ordinary power. If it sometimes shook the pillars of justice, if it sometimes loosened the bonds of humanity, the transient evil must be endured for the sake of the future permanent good. If France shall ultimately obtain freedom at no greater expence than the blood which has already been spilt, though individuals may have to mourn their private losses, the public cannot repent of the purchase.

But does humanity never speak on the other side of the question, not think of what those wretches suffered, on whom the former government wrecked its vengeance uncontrouled? Their sufferings, indeed, were not seen in the streets, nor related in Journals; for the dungeons of the *Bastille* and of the Castle of Vincennes, were closed upon their miseries. But have you, Sir, whose researches have travelled so far into Asia for stories of oppression, never heard of those at your door? You will tell us, as the other defenders of the French Monarchy have done, of the infrequency of such instances.

But in the system of government, it is not what *is* done, but what *may* be done, that wisdom and foresight look to.—You talk of the mildness of Louis XVI. you speak with a bombastic rapture of the charms of his Queen: the poets of *Augustus*, with a taste as elegant, and a style somewhat chaster than yours, could tell us of the mildness and munificence of his reign; but that power which in him was mildness and munificence, in his successors was tyranny and murder.

The circle that sees and can best talk of Kings, is a narrow and a partial one; and the delegated power of the Sovereign is often mischievous in the extreme, while he, from whom it flows, is amiable and beneficent. Kings may be praised by poets, and idolized by courtiers, even without the aid of much imagination or flattery, while their people are groaning under the oppressions of their government. On such testimony Louis XIV. has been celebrated as the most liberal, the most magnificent, the greatest of Monarchs; the miseries of millions of his subjects make no figure in his history, or at least in the common and current ideas of his history. To them no painter has given colour, no poet description; they make no part
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Of the pedestal in the statue of the *Place des Victoires*.

The distresses of the lower orders of the people, the want of food, of cloathing, of fuel, are not calculated to figure in painting and sculpture, to melt in poetry, or to rouse in eloquence. These orders, however, are what political and philosophical truth must own to be the nation. It was the misfortune in France, that the manners modelled by the form of government, established a sort of contempt for every individual, who had not rank and fashion to recommend him. This mode of thinking was not the less fatal, and was much less easy to be corrected, for its really not being highly censurable in those who indulged it. It was not the effect of selfishness and inhumanity; it arose from habit merely; it was worn by a man of the Court like his new suit, without any other consideration than that his companions had the same. His sphere of connection with mankind reached no farther than a few parties of rank and fashion, whom he called the World. The twenty millions of Frenchmen, who were not of these parties, went for nothing in the account. The men of superior rank who thought thus, were in general polite, obliging, honourable, and brave. Some of them, whom stran-

gers were most most likely to see, were possessed also of the more solid and estimable qualities of taste, of sentiment, of information. But they still retained the aristocratic prejudices of their order. These are, indeed, not unnatural to minds of a certain refinement. The heroism of knight errantry, the gallantry of a cavalier, the spirit of hereditary nobility, all these interest the feelings and captivate the imagination. We are, therefore, not surprised, that you, Sir, should be seduced by them.

It is not, perhaps, unfair to bring the very abasement which the nobility of France has suffered, in proof of its having somewhat deserved that abasement. That this great and numerous body, possessed for so many centuries of its elevated station, with so much power, and so much property to attach mens interests, with all its present and all its traditionary grandeur to overawe their minds; that such a body should have shrunk into annihilation without a struggle, is pretty strong evidence of its having lost, by some demerit, that influence which it should have had in the country; that it held the people in a ~~vassalage~~ vassalage intolerably oppressive, and had exercised all the feudal tyranny without having gained any of the feudal attachment.

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A similar argument may be brought with regard to the church. The higher ecclesiastics must have forfeited the esteem and regard of their own subordinate clergy, and of the people, before their power, and their domains could have been wrested from them, without the impression of sacrilege or impiety, almost without the idea of injustice. Had they claimed veneration by their sanctity, or good will by their benevolence, the reverence, or the love of the people, would have felt and resented the infringement on their possessions. The people would have complained from sentiment, but it would have still been a question how far they complained with reason. The property of the church certainly stood on a very different footing from that of an hereditary descendible estate. No man is born Archbishop of Paris, or Abbé of St Germain. Their great incomes were a stipendiary allowance, though they arose from the possession of land. The function of ecclesiastical is more sacred than that of temporal offices; but if their emoluments are beyond the abilities of the state, or if any of those religious offices are entirely unnecessary, it may fairly enough be argued, that the power of resumption of the antient stipends, or of abolition of the antient offices, lies with the people. Even if it

were to be granted that all the revenues of the church had been laid out in the best possible way, yet the charity of the state, like the charity of individuals, must be a secondary consideration to its own immediate subsistence or support. State necessity called for retrenchments and for imposts. Had the King retained that power which this very necessity tended to overthrow, he would probably have wrung some more millions of livres from the poverty of the people. Was it much to be regretted that his successors in that power found a resource in the exorbitant wealth of the church?

I easily allow for your feelings on behalf of the monastic establishments. There is a "dim religious" reverence, a tenderness for storied melancholy, which the heart and the fancy will readily acknowledge towards their "antient solitary reign;" but the abolishment of their cold ascetic *austerities*, (for in a cloyster there can scarcely be any *virtues*) will not, I believe, be considered by philosophy, (or philanthropy, if you should dislike the word philosophy) as one of the evils of the Revolution.

From you, Sir, one would hardly have expected that violent and somewhat illiberal attack on the philosophers and men of letters in France which your book contains. Do you
really,

really, in your cooler judgment, believe, that the world has gained nothing by their labours? Has your sympathy in the pride or prosperity of mankind found nothing with which it could congratulate itself in all the increased knowledge and humanity of the present century, for a part of which we are indebted to the men whom your zeal in this argument has condemned in the gross? Would you forego all the discoveries of their science, all the productions of their genius, to retire again into the shade of that gloomy superstition which your fancy has hallowed? In all ages philosophers have been sceptical, and wits licentious: but it is not like the liberality of Mr B. to proscribe philosophy and wit in a peevish indulgence of his aversion to scepticism and licentiousness.

As I am not a pleader so determined for one of the parties in this great question as you, Sir, I will freely confess, that in the opinion of thinking and impartial men, there are, in the present state of France, considerable abuses, and that in the prospect of her future condition, there are to be foreseen much difficulty and danger. In some of the members of her National Assembly there is a want of virtue, in more there is a want of wisdom, and in a still greater number a want of moderation; while

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in the aggregate body there is a deficiency of power to enable it always to adopt the best measures, or to enforce those which it has found a necessity of adopting. From the imposition and collection of the revenue, from the construction of the inferior municipal jurisdictions, but especially from the situation of the army, they are threatened with the overthrow of all they have done in correction of the old, or in the establishment of the new Constitution. But many of the friends of mankind will hope, as certainly all of them must wish, that all those dangers may be avoided and those difficulties overcome; that the wisdom of the enlightened, and the virtue of the good among them, may succeed in establishing, though not a perfect or an unexceptionable government, one at least more consonant to the *natural rights* (for the expression, after all their abuse, and your ridicule, is still in itself a good one) and more friendly to the happiness of man than that which they have abolished.

Your objections are stated when the new constitutions are yet in their beginning, before the effects of their general operation can be seen, or the errors in their detail corrected. You write with the decision of a supposed perfect knowledge of the present circumstances,
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and predict with a perfect confidence of the future. A little more diffidence in opinion, and a little more reserve in expression, might have been safer, as well as more conciliating. One consideration should have especially induced this, which must have great weight in a calm and dispassionate view of this whole business. The bulk of the people seem to be satisfied with the Revolution. After a considerable time to cool from the fervor of newly-acquired freedom, a great majority of the nation have, on trying occasions, declared for, and supported the measures of the National Assembly. It is bold in an individual foreigner, however able and enlightened, to arraign the measures which so general a suffrage of the people, whose interest they concern, has sanctioned.

While I venture these remarks on your performance, I mean not to deprectate its merit, or to doubt the goodness of those motives with which it was written. I feel all its genius and its ability, with that partiality which is inspired by its virtue and its benevolence. This is an advantage which the writings of its author, in general, possess. The defects of his character are pardoned like the defects of his writings, because they proceed rather from the extreme of estimable qualities, than from the want of them;

them; from overstrained feeling, from mistaken humanity, from the zeal of right pushed almost to fanaticism.

With, me, Sir, the regret of such defects is always attended by a wish for their correction, and a hope of the usefulness of those talents by which they are accompanied. From the spirit of your present performance, I anticipate a conduct beneficial to the community. I see in it a dread of the inconsiderate desire of reform; a jealousy of needless innovation; which it seems to me extremely useful to keep awake at the present time. Even when the outcry for change and innovation is honest, it may be hurtful; but if it is only the cloak of profligate self-interest, or inordinate ambition, who for their own private advantage would risk the peace and prosperity of the country, it is doubly to be dreaded. It is not from the mean or desperate tools of sedition that the country has most to fear, but from more artful and more respectable partizans, whose abilities for mischief hide their inclination for it. To you, Sir, and other virtuous citizens, the public looks for protection against such enemies. If faction should at any time wish to corrupt our freedom into anarchy, to usurp the just prerogatives of the Crown, or to infringe the rights of the people, from you,
Sir,

Sir, we shall expect their defence. With moderate and virtuous men, the present performance will be a guarantee for your conduct; they will figure you laying your hand upon this book, swearing loyalty to your king, and fidelity to the constitution; pledging yourself as attached to no principles so much as to those of genuine patriotism and public virtue; as subservient to the interests of no party in opposition to those of your country.

BRUTUS.

Nov. 22d 1790.

LETTER VII.

To R. B. S*****, Esq.

S I R,

SOME of the feverer philosophers have excluded eloquence, poetry, and wit, from their system of a republic, as tending to mislead the people, to perplex those councils which wisdom only should be suffered to guide. This will readily be allowed too rigid an idea for modern times, yet it were well, perhaps, if in public men and in public assemblies, the more solid qualities of knowledge, virtue, and prudence, were allowed a superiority to those ornamental talents which captivate and dazzle the lively and the unthinking.

You have contrived to apply wit to subjects generally held unsusceptible of its attractions, to the dry and intricate operations of figures, to the complicated details of finance, to the laborious investigation of public accounts. Perhaps, however, exclusive of the exuberance of your fancy, this talent might in some measure
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be derived from the private habits of your life. The Lydians are said to have invented gaming, in a season of famine, to appease hunger : so, if a man cannot pay an account, it seems an allowable expedient if he can contrive to laugh at it. From the same source certain splenetic people have traced your unwearied attention to the national debt. Who, says your favourite poet,

“ Who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus ? ”

But the millions so often in your mouth have some little connexion with the money you hope for in your purse ; because there is a distant prospect that you may one day be in a situation to draw on them for yourself.

In your late annual harangue on this subject, you ventured on some expressions which even the most innocent and unsuspicious of the new country members could not help applying. When you talked of “ deluding our creditors,” and of the “ land of *promise*,” they looked to one another as *Scrub* does to Mrs Sullen in the play, with faces lighted up by the discovery of a joke amidst the bewildering darkness of the *unfunded debt* and the *sinking fund*. The last phrase, as they were ignorant of its being borrowed from *Junius*, they could hardly have expected from
you,

you, as it was a bible one; but they recollected other instances of your having shewn a perfect knowledge of the history of the Jews *.

Some, indeed, of the elder and graver of those country gentlemen, who have some old-fashioned *landed-interest* prejudices about them, do not so easily relish jokes upon public matters, when uttered by men who have "no stake in the hedge," they will allow a D**** to wander after extravagant conceits, or a H**** to twist scripture into buffoonery; because those gentlemen have some thousands of acres to back their pretensions to humour; as if wit, like bail, were to be justified by the extent of a man's possessions: they will even pardon your friend Mr C**** of Norfolk his honest declaration of disapproving "every one thing the minister has done," because a gentleman of so many thousands a-year is entitled to that sort of unperplexed wholesale understanding, to which such a declaration is suitable. But from you, Sir, they expect some appositeness in your allusions, and some argument in your objections.

Those gentlemen, however, should consider whether the limitations they would impose on you are consonant to reason and justice. When you

* Vid. an admirable scene in the *School for Scandal*.

you come down to the House to bully Administration by strong assertions, or to ridicule it by flippant jests, you are only labouring in your vocation. The House of Commons is your estate, your freehold, out of which you are to draw by every means in your power, as they do from their acres, your revenue and your credit. The public, the country of which you talk so well, is not the object of your concern, but merely the object of your discussion; 'tis only the topic of your argument, the canvas for the pictures of your fancy, the theme for the display of your wit. Whether it really thrives or not, whether the measures you oppose be really for its advantage, cannot reasonably be supposed to have any impression on your mind. The prosperity of the public *estate*, with the situation of which you seem so minutely acquainted, is nothing to you; its *Stewardship*, whether it prospered or not, might be something, and you have many of the virtues of a Steward.

But the present time is unfavourable to the success of your exertions. Your pleasantries will not unbend the muscles of those plodding faces which are to be seen in Lombard-street and the Stock Exchange; and I will suggest a doubt whether it be worth your while to disturb your holiday festivity with the more serious and elaborate

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borate calculations of your Anti-Budget. The little hieroglyphic article at the end of your most favourite newspaper, will outweigh all the lengthened columns it devotes to your eloquence; while the 3 per cents are at 80, the Minister will smile alike at the comic powers of Mr S*****, and the tragic predictions of Dr Price.

BRUTUS.

January 5th 1791.

LETTER VIII.

*To the Right Hon. W. P***.*

SIR,

SOME laughing author tells us of an old lady, who, upon any little grievance that befel her, used to write to the King. I am sufficiently aware of the ridicule which may be affixed to the circumstance of an individual addressing the Minister.—Yet a man not unaccustomed to think on political subjects, who has lived with some degree of observation, and amidst a circle capable of informing him, to a very advanced period of life, may, in this country, and in this era of political disquisition, be pardoned the vanity of such a correspondence. An honest man without any pretension to superior abilities, who has only talents and moderation enough to discover what the better part of the country thinks, and who has no motive to mislead him either in forming or in expressing his opinion, may be of some little use even to a well-informed Minister. If he cannot in-

fluence the conduct of a bad administration, he may at least convey a suffrage not unpleasing to a good one.

To you, Sir, he will be particularly entitled to address himself, when he considers you as the Minister of the people. This title, I know, has not usually been allowed you; titles are given to men, as names to things, from their first appearance to the eye; and you were certainly less formed to conciliate popularity than to deserve it. But whoever looks back to the history of your public life, will see that its distinctions chiefly flowed from the suffrage of the people: Under the shade of your father's name, and with a fortune not unlike to his, you came into power, in opposition to that Aristocracy which had so long encompassed the throne. That aristocracy forgot the moderation which used to secure its influence, which still characterized many of its individuals; it forced the crown to an alliance with the people; and the people, who are generally somewhat guided by sentiment, were not unwilling to trust the hereditary virtue of a young man who had not had time to foul his mind with the practice of older and more experienced politicians.—This connection, Sir, we wish you not to forget. We have not yet found reason to withhold our confidence

fidence in the *wisdom* of your measures; but it is still more material to retain that which we bestow on their *virtue*.

In consideration of this, we are sometimes willing to allow a little more to the feelings of the man, than may be thought to accord with the cautious prudence of the Minister. If, in some measures of a brilliant and popular kind, you have ventured to engage with a degree of warmth beyond the ordinary reserve of a statesman, with a quickness not suited to that wary step, that *pas de plomb* which the hoary counselor of Louis XIII. recommends, we are disposed to separate those individual instances from the ordinary tenor of your administration, to allow a sort of holiday excursion to official prudence; and, as tradition tells of *Charlemagne* in his hours of social festivity, to suppose the Chancellor of the Exchequer to be gone, and the animated generosity of Mr P*** to interest itself in the somewhat romantic notion of the time.

In this country, he who begins a second *lust-rum* in the highest department of the state may be regarded as a permanent Minister. You have stood some shocks which may be fairly held as proofs of the firmness of your mind, the extent of your talents, and the probable stability

of your situation. In one of the rudest conflicts of party which the nation has witnessed in modern times, you came off with victory, though opposed by the ablest and most experienced politicians. In two contests with foreign powers, you supported the dignity, and exerted the force of the empire, with a decision, a promptitude and an energy, that has seldom been surpassed by a British administration. It must be allowed that in all those events a very uncommon degree of good fortune attended you ; but the epithet *felix* is a compliment in every wise man's vocabulary as well as in the Roman. To seize the occasions which good-fortune presents to us is always the mark of superior talents ; to seize them at all is a mark of such talents in possession ; to seize them with the readiness which you shewed in some instances, is a mark of such talents at command. The public acknowledged this in you, and gave you credit for a sort of intuitive state abilities, which shot forth at once into vigour, unripened by time, unconfirmed by experience.

This is the language of eulogium ; your enemies will but just venture to call it flattery. But I have neither motive nor a mind for flattery, and my purpose is not eulogium. The talents and virtues of a Minister are the right,
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the property of the people ; I call upon you, in the name of the people, for their exercise and their use. In this demand I have but little personal interest ; I have lived through many ministries, and have now but a few days left of pride in the glory, or mortification in the disgrace of my country.—Forgive this old man's mention of myself ; I speak in the first person, but I think for my equals and co-evals, a circle as much more respectable, as it is more impartial, than that which glitters in the sunshine of your favour, or that which scowls around the leaders of Opposition. From this middling rank of men, that point in the country where information and independence meet, arises the genuine and lasting reputation of a Minister. From such men arose the fame of your father ; I hope you have an ambition proud enough to look for that of their posterity.

I trust I shall not be supposed to favour despotism, when I say that in this country the public interest suffers nearly as often from a want of power as from a want of good intention in Ministers. It has been the vice of some administrations to compromise away their duty and their reputation, to be satisfied with the presumed purity of their intentions, and to suffer all the mischiefs that could result from their want

of power to carry those intentions into execution, to fall upon the country. We trust you are "made of sterner stuff," that you will never submit to barter the pride of right for the vanity of place, nor cling by the elevation of office amidst the wreck of real and honourable dignity.

At present you have no such trial to encounter: With the confidence of the people, and the concurrence of a great majority of their representatives, it is a compliment, if we look without jealousy on your power to promote our interests. With that commanding place in the scale of Europe, which some late instances of the force and resources of the empire have given it, its credit and its commerce are at their highest point; the public revenue has been augmented beyond even the sanguine calculations of the Treasury. You had the prudence to adopt some of the best ideas of your predecessors, and the good-fortune to see them as successful in the execution as they were promising in theory. The increased wealth of the country enables it to bear increased taxes with but little complaint from individuals, and with no hurtful consequences even to local and particular manufactures. These advantages we have gained in the short space of a five years administration;

ministration; and it was another piece of your good fortune that they succeeded a period of public calamity, which, after the elation of former successes, we felt with an unreasonable depression, and predicted consequences in future, to which the temper of the nation always disposes it to give ear in the hour of adversity, but which its vigour and its genius always contradict in experience.

With all those advantages on your side, with the reasonable prospect of a lasting peace, and at the beginning of a parliament friendly to your exertions, it may fairly be expected that you will think of objects beyond the daily and common employments of official men, whose minds are often chained down by the cares and necessities of the moment, forced to devote their talents to the petty contests of internal cabals, to the management of narrow and struggling majorities, or the paltry solitudes of elections to secure them. If the weight of the people with you saves you the trouble of such attentions, they have some title to expect in return those great and permanent benefits which they place you in a situation to procure, or at least to attempt with a probability of success, for your country. One or two of those important objects I will take the liberty to mention; not
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that I suppose you stand in need of the suggestion, but merely to tell you, that the people look to them with anxiety, and to you with expectation.

One, which must of necessity soon become an object of your attention, is the situation of our *Eastern* possessions. The great company by which that Empire is immediately held, exhibits a singular phenomenon in politics. A society of merchants, incorporated for the purpose of trading with a joint capital, and supporting by the magnitude of that capital the demands and difficulties of an extensive and distant commerce; that corporation becoming sovereign of a country containing 16 millions of inhabitants, and affording an annual revenue of several millions Sterling, is an event which must certainly, in one way or another, produce powerful and momentous effects on the nation in which it exists. Whether these are useful or pernicious is a question of much doubt; it is a question which, in your own mind at least, you must unavoidably meet; and it will not be easy to avoid a discussion of it in Parliament.

There may be abuses, which, from their very magnitude, we dare not attack; gangrenes in the state, like some in the body, which we are
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content to palliate, from a fear of amputation being mortal. But in both cases our fears often betray us, and it is only from a conjunction of fortitude with skill that we are to look for a cure. In the consideration of this great question you will be assailed by a thousand motives of present conveniency, “ That bawd Commodity,” as Shakespeare phrases it, will insinuate the danger to the finances, to the credit, to the growing wealth, and the increasing power of the country, which any change so great as an entire resumption of the charter of this company, or even taking their territorial acquisitions into the hands of Government, would occasion. But if wisdom and philosophy speak on the opposite side; if they tell you that, from the time of *Carthage* downwards, the Dominion of Merchants has been oppressive and fatal; that from the nature and constitution of the Company which holds this Dominion, (particularly the opportunity which it affords to its wealthy servants of purchasing by shares in its stock, a sanction for their own malversations) there are abuses in its administration superadded to the general evils of mercantile sovereignty; that the very commercial advantages pretended to arise from it to the parent state, are but the specious mischiefs of monopoly; and

and that the real interests of our manufactures and commerce would be infinitely promoted by throwing open the East India trade to the invention and industry of the nation at large. If such arguments, which a liberal and enlightened period like the present is accustomed to hear without wonder or alarm, should press upon your consideration, you will listen to them with impartiality*.—You will not interpose your own private conveniency or accommodation between such advantages and the public; you will not suffer a party in the India House, or their representatives in the House of Commons, to overawe or to rebuke the genius of Great Britain, of freedom, of humanity.

The existence of that party is one of the greatest evils of which we have to complain in this business. It has become a kind of fourth estate,

* It has been said, that the late *Adam Smith* (whose genius and knowledge embraced more objects, and produced greater effects in their discussion, than any other writer in Europe) wished to have seen you once more before his death, to have left, like *Cato*, the last sound his voice could utter, his "*delenda est Carthago*" against the East India Monopoly. I allow something for the enthusiasm of a system so splendid as his; but the arguments for his conviction are before the world, and you are not ignorant of their force.

tate, and weighs with an unconstitutional preponderancy, on the measures of Government. It is only a virtuous Minister who will wish to resist it ; it is only a powerful one who can resist it with safety : if we call for this resistance in you, Sir, it is from a confidence with which you ought to be flattered, both in your uprightness and ability.

In the province of Minister, you will probably confine yourself to public and political considerations ; else you might hear, from many wise and virtuous citizens, complaints of this Asiatic System in more private points of view. This Crusade of Avarice, they would tell you, like those of superstition in the middle ages, powerfully affects the manners of the people. It has increased the influence of " ill-persuading gold" in a most rapid and extensive degree ; it has changed the sober and moderate economy of domestic life, which nursed at once the private and the patriotic virtues ; it has substituted the vanity of ostentatious wealth for the ambition of an honest popularity, and spread over the land the refinements of Eastern luxury, to displace the wholesome enjoyments of industry, and the manly and vigorous exertions of genius.

As a mere commercial question, it will not escape you, that in this trade, as in every other, the spirit of adventure, if the country is ripe for it, will burst the shackles of excessive restriction, and that if an open trade is prohibited, a contraband one will be carried on equally hurtful to the Company, without equal benefit to the State. I believe it is pretty well known, that vessels under Imperial or Swedish colours have lain in the very pool of the Thames, sitting out in the employment of British Merchants for India. These interlopers the Company were afraid to stop, even with the law on their side, or to meet the question of the insufficiency of their investments for either the home or the foreign market. Will not this clandestine invasion of a monopoly, which they only hold against their country, still prevail? Will not *Ireland* openly assail it?

Our connexion with *Ireland* is an object of consideration less pressing, but not less momentous, nor less difficult than that with India. It was reserved for that unfortunate Minister by whose timid and palliating politics America was severed from the Empire, to loosen, by a like imbecility of measures, the closeness of that tie which held Ireland to Great Britain. During a capricious succession of Vice-Roys, he
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had alienated the affections as much as he had lost the respect of Ireland. By the common effect of his half resolutions, he had kept up all the odium of hostility, without any of its firmness ; the face of a bully, with the heart of a coward.—But I will not drag him from the shade of that retirement in which the compassion of his country allows him to be forgotten. His situation is interesting, and disarms resentment ; let him but feel for the mischief he has caused, and my charity shall spare him.

Without going back then to the causes of the conduct by which this event took place, it is sufficient to consider, that in fact Ireland is in that situation with regard to Great Britain, which is pregnant with danger to both. It is a subject of so delicate a kind, that I will use no determinate vocables to describe that situation ; it is like a matrimonial quarrel, which should never be defined, but which, it is sufficient to know, is ruinous to the family, and ought to be made up as soon as possible. I know not that Ireland, soberly and moderately speaking, has gained any thing substantial by these concessions, which, in the hour of our weakness, she wrung from Britain : yet it was natural for a spirited people who felt some of the badges of former

former oppression hanging upon them, to shake them off indignantly, though they weighed not a straw against their interest. But if the spirit of jealousy and separation should increase, the consequences may be more easily feared than foretold. To Britain they must certainly be extremely hurtful; but to Ireland, ruinous: I believe there is not a sensible moderate man in that kingdom, who can look on the situation of his country and doubt the proposition. Such is the danger of the present position of both countries; an ordinary administration may palliate or temporise with that danger; but it would be a proud undertaking for a great and a popular Minister to endeavour to remove it for ever.

The word *Union*, I believe, is not popular in Ireland; yet if reason or precedent may be looked to, the idea should not be disagreeable to that country. Every advantage which Scotland has received from a similar connection, Ireland is better calculated to obtain; and many of the disadvantages which nationality magnified at the time, and which in some degree have been felt since, Ireland is not so subject to as Scotland was. Her commerce and manufactures stand more in need of the fostering influence of this junction with her wealthy neighbour than those

those of Scotland did ; and the non-residence of her absentees, if increased at all, would be increased in a much smaller proportion. Her jealousy of an united legislature may be natural ; and yet, if the probable conduct of the legislative body be considered, I think she will not have much to fear on that score :—She knows the value of her present representatives, and I will not presume to characterize them even from their own authority. To secure her from an over-burden of British debt would be an arrangement difficult, but not impossible ; and as to the taxes she might hereafter be liable to, it is her misfortune at present to be subject to so few. The few to which she is subject, press on her starving peasantry with a weight that bears them down in a miserable and hopeless vassalage ; if commerce and manufactures should subject her to those of a better sort, it would be a symptom of her prosperity : nobody complains of succeeding to an estate, because the inheritance burthens him with a quit-rent.—The subject, I know, is complicated, and this is not the place, even had I the abilities, to detail it.—I do but point it out to your consideration, at a period when it may be considered with advantage ; when peace has left both countries leisure for the discussion

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and when Britain is in a situation to make her friendship a privilege, and her displeasure a misfortune. If there is patriotism on either side of the water, it will compromise little losses for the attainment of an object so essential to the future security of the empire.

I will not add to the length of a letter already too long by suggestions of a less important kind. There are local improvements and local abuses, of which a minister may long remain ignorant from the very power that should procure him information ; because that power creates a motive in individuals for concealment or misrepresentation. A minister is commonly misled by individuals ; 'tis the broad and general voice of the people, informed by experience and prompted by necessity, that can truly guide him. The information which he thus acquires is like the light of the sun, which equally illuminates every object around us ; private official intelligence is often like a narrow dark-lantern gleam, that only enlightens a corner.

If I shall find it necessary to trouble you with any further communications, they shall at least have the merit of fidelity. Absolutely unknown, though I believe not altogether unnoticed,

noticed, I cannot be allured by the hope of reward ; and it can alarm none but bad men, to be told, that falsehood is the only danger I shall fear.

BRUTUS.

January 17th 1791.

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LETTER IX.

*To His Grace the D. of P*****.*

MY LORD,

AMIDST the violence of political contest to which this country is subject, men are too generally measured, whether in praise or blame, by the standard of their party. A unity of party comes in place of a unity of character, and a warm and blind attachment to a particular set of measures, or rather to a particular junto of men, is held to be the Catholic virtue of the Statesman and Politician.

But though in the circles of political cabal this doctrine is commonly allowed, the people at large make distinctions somewhat beyond it. They form an estimate of individuals separately from the side to which they belong, and repose on private worth a confidence of a firmer kind than that which depends on the general complexion of a party.

It must flatter your Grace to be told, that such has been hitherto the estimation of your character

character with the public; that the general opinion marked you out for one, on whose virtue we might rely, as a security against his doing any thing, either in opposition or in power, unworthy of a good man. It happened, indeed unfortunately, that some of that party, with whom you was connected, required such a surety; that, like other rich sureties, you risked your reputation in alliance with their want of it. It is in reputation as in money; there is in absolute bankruptcy an advantage of which profligate men avail themselves. Having nothing else to lose, they set deeper stakes, and play bolder strokes than men of property and credit; and when such strokes are successful, the world is too apt to forget the profligacy of the adventure in its good fortune. In one instance, too striking to be soon forgotten, the country narrowly escaped a situation in which an attempt of this sort might have succeeded—but we recollect, my Lord, that even in the situation we feared, it would *not* have succeeded; that the integrity and the honour of the D. of P***** would have prevented it.

Thus, impressed with a sense of respect and gratitude to his name, he will not wonder at our surprise and disappointment on seeing it lately included in an instrument which it was

impossible not to feel as a public national disgrace. There is something in the very nature of a money transaction, which makes one always desirous to manage it with privacy and delicacy. It is like some other humiliating necessities of our condition, which we submit to with reluctance, and wish neither to be seen nor remembered; like these too, the propriety of its delicate management is increased in proportion to the rank of the parties. There is often magnificence in the spending of money; but the borrowing of it is always a paltry sort of business, to which the imagination cannot annex any idea of sublimity, unless indeed it might trace a distant one in the ruin of the lenders. There are authors of your Grace's acquaintance who can afford examples of the sublime in this way.

But the matter is serious, my Lord, and I will not indulge myself further in any parenthesis of fancy. I speak with the regret of a fellow-citizen; others will question you with the triumph of an enemy. They will ask if it became your Grace, and your confederates in this business, to be parties to a deed which carried the second name in the empire to a market of foreign Jews; to supplicate a loan, and mortgage for the security part of the realm
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of E***** ; to open a subscription like those for a family in distress, and to copy the features of the transaction from the most hackney of such precedents ; to take up money which was to be re-imbursed by way of *Lottery*, the trick of strolling pedlars, and bankrupt dealers in small-ware. But I spare my countrymen so mortifying a detail. They will blush to read it even here ; but what will be their feelings, when they think of such a paper being stuck up in Flemish alehouses, and conn'd over by every little shopkeeper of Antwerp, who can muster up a thousand guilders, for the vanity of being a creditor to the heir of G**** B*****. The statutes have not made it treason to imagine the death of the P***** of W***** ; but there is something more humiliating, though it may not be so punishable as treason, in weighing his life against the fears of a Jew, and the calculations of a money-broker.

But the courteous maxims of our constitution are more extensive than our penal laws. Neither these, nor indeed the nature of the transaction, will allow us to believe that the illustrious personages themselves “ can have done this wrong.” It must have been the in-

vention of some mean and desperate spend-thrift, accustomed to such shifts, and insensible to their ignominy. Noble natures are often easy in proportion to their nobleness, and for youth and inexperience there is an additional apology; but we must stretch our indulgence far, to pardon the allowance or participation of such a business to the D****s of P***** and N*****, to E**I F***** and L**d S*****. We blame but slightly Mess. E***** and P****. They are *official* to the P*****; and professional indifference of this sort, the “*iras & verba locant*” may excuse a lawyer; but you, my Lord, and your noble co-trustees, have neither the apology of habit, nor the inducement of a fee, for “letting out” your character.

To such men the country looked for protection, if any circumstances should happen (and at one time its fears had anticipated such circumstances) in which their protection might be necessary. Had not the glaring evidence of every news-paper prevented it, the fears of that former period would have guided our belief in the present, and we should have filled up the trustees in this deed accordingly. With the Dukedom of C***** and the Bishoprick of O*****

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any trustees might have served; unless, indeed, the names to which I allude, like the *negative quantities* in Algebra, had subtracted from the solidity of pledges so valuable. Consistency of character is a natural criticism in morals, as in poetry. There are names which we could have seen in such a paper, with the degree of ill-natured satisfaction which arises from this consistency, and we should have given their owners that sort of credit for the transaction which we afford to the dexterity of *Scapin* in the farce, or of a Barrington at the Old Bailey. But we cannot spare the names of P***y and B*****k to ridicule or reproach; we would keep them, my Lord, if their noble owners will allow us, sacred to honour, to virtue, and their country.

Amidst the venial levity of youthful pleasure and amusement, we must still imagine an ingenuous mind such as we know the P***** to possess, sometimes listening to more grave and dignified counsels. He cannot apply to persons more worthy of his confidence than your Grace and your associates; but the purity and dignity of your influence, must be lost for ever, if
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you allow it to degrade itself in offices so unworthy.

There is, on the other hand, a numerous circle of rank and fashion which looks to his example as a pattern for its conduct. Their imitation will be doubly sanctioned, if to his example they can add the authority of your acquiescence. Alas! the moles and specks of a fine portrait are easily copied by inferior artists; but its beauties escape their pencil. Every young man can make a long dinner at Weltjie's, can embarrass his affairs, and borrow from usurers to redeem them; but it is in the ability of few to charm with the graces of manner and the flow of conversation; to inform their minds with classical knowledge, and to deliver that knowledge with easy and pointed elocution.

In certain elevated stations men cannot be forgotten of posterity. Your illustrious friend, in the vivacity of the moment, may be thoughtless of what history shall say of him; your Grace, and your noble colleagues, in this transaction, are nearer the period when we anticipate its relation. Read again, my Lord, the instrument which has given occasion to this hasty letter, and say whether it
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is such a record as you would wish to descend to posterity ; even as you would wish one of your distant successors to find, when he was seeking, with an honest pride, to blazon the achievements of his ancestors.

BRUTUS.

March 21st 1791.

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